

# Exhibit 6

# Attorney General Ellison releases report on social media and AI's effect on young people

*Report commissioned by Legislature details how emerging technologies are harming youth and makes recommendations for creating safer online environment for youth*

**February 1, 2024 (SAINT PAUL)** – Today, Attorney General Keith Ellison's office released a report detailing the harmful effects that emerging technologies, like social media platforms and artificial intelligence, are having on young people in Minnesota. The report also makes a series of recommendations for policymakers to create a safer and healthier online environment for children and teenagers.

The Minnesota Legislature commissioned the report in 2023 and required the Attorney General to deliver it by February 1, 2024. See 2023 Minn. Laws, Chapter 57, Art. 1, § 4, subd. 3 (Report).

"Emerging technologies like social media are changing how kids in Minnesota grow up, often in profoundly negative ways," **said Attorney General Ellison**. "As things stand, technology companies with little oversight and a habit of putting profits over people have nearly unfettered access to our kids via their computers and smart phones. I have heard countless stories from anguished parents and teenagers about the harm this is causing across our state. This unacceptable status quo must change if we want young people in Minnesota to grow up with the dignity, safety, and respect every one of them deserves.

"The report my office released today details how technologies like social media and AI are harming children and teenagers and makes recommendations for what we can do to create a better online environment for young people," **added Ellison**. "I will continue to use all the tools at my disposal to prevent ruthless corporations from preying on our children. I hope other policymakers will use the contents of this report to do the same."

"This report is essential reading for anyone concerned about the impact that social media is having on Minnesotans, and the mental health of our young people in particular," **said Representative Zack Stephenson, Chair of the Commerce Finance and Policy Committee in the Minnesota House of Representatives**. "I look forward to working with the Attorney General to enact its recommendations as quickly as possible."

## Structure and analysis of the report

The Report on Emerging Technology and Its Effects on Youth Well-Being is written to help the general public and policymakers better understand the unique and multi-faceted ways in which emerging technologies like social media harm the well-being of young people, as well as the specific design choices and features that lead to this harm. The report also analyzes previous legislative efforts to curb that harm to see what has worked and what has fallen short. Finally, the report offers recommendations for legislative actions that can be taken to create a more positive online environment for young people in Minnesota.

**Section 1** of the report documents the evidence that emerging technologies are having a negative impact on the lives of young Minnesotans and looks at the specific product design choices that facilitate these negative consequences, including infinite scroll, excessive notifications, and optimizing content for engagement above all else. The report discusses in detail negative outcomes that include:

- Experiencing cyberbullying & harassment, facilitated by the choices of technology platforms;
- Witnessing disturbing, graphic, and sexual content, often recommended by AI-powered algorithms;
- Experiencing envy and upward social comparison, which are encouraged by technology platform dynamics;
- Excessively and compulsively using technology in ways that displace beneficial activities like sleep and in-person socialization and lead to reduced well-being

**Section 2** reviews existing legislative efforts at mitigating the harms caused by emerging technologies with an eye to what policymakers in Minnesota can learn from these efforts. This includes actions from Congress and various states, as well as actions taken by international actors like the European Union.

**Section 3** looks at what lessons can be learned from the successes and shortcomings of the various actions described in Section 2. These lessons include:

- Being too prescriptive about solutions can have negative consequences.
- Broad reporting requirements have often not had a material impact.
- Age verification needs to be done in a manner that respects privacy and free expression concerns.
- Banning social media platforms for youth has both pros and cons.
- Policies relating to content have been ineffective and led to opposition related to potential misuse and legal challenges.
- A design focus has been impactful both within companies and in legislation.

**Section 4** incorporates the lessons from the previous section to make a series of recommendations about actions policymakers can take to make technology products more beneficial.

One of the most significant recommendations is banning “Dark Patterns” within platform design. Dark patterns refer to the designs of user interfaces and algorithms in ways that benefit companies at the expense of users, often in ways that are imperceptible and manipulative. Examples of such features include optimizing for time spent watching or consuming content, scrolling interfaces that auto-load more content, and notifications that are meant to drive users back to the product rather than inform them of important time-sensitive information.

Additional recommendations include:

- Mandating aggressive privacy defaults to limit the unwanted sharing of data and images, especially for sexual content.

- Mandating responsible amplification through limits on engagement-based optimization.
- Mandating user and parent empowerment via consumer-friendly device-based defaults.
- Mandating interoperability to encourage consumer choice.
- Mandating usage limits and education within schools.

**Section 5** discusses the likely impact of the proposed legislation on the youth mental-health crisis in America and reviews the ways in which the increasing prevalence of AI makes the need for change all the greater.

## Background on the Report

In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature directed the Attorney General's Office to research and prepare a report on the effect of new and emerging technologies on the well-being of Minnesotans.

The Legislature required that the report accomplish the following goals:

- Evaluate the impact of technology companies and their products on the mental health and well-being of Minnesotans, with a focus on children;
- Discuss proposed and enacted consumer protection laws related to the regulation of technology companies in other jurisdictions;
- Include policy recommendations to the Minnesota legislature.

See 2023 Minn. Laws, Chapter 57, Art. 1, § 4, subd. 3 (Report).

This report was prepared with the assistance of Dr. Ravi Iyer, a talented and highly experienced expert in this field. Dr. Iyer is a technologist and academic psychologist who is currently the managing director of USC Marshall School's Neely Center for Ethical Leadership and Decision Making. He previously worked for over four years at Meta (which owns Facebook and Instagram) addressing the societal impact of Facebook's platform and has published dozens of scholarly articles in his field. In addition, Alex Barkley, a third-year law student at the University of Minnesota Law School and legal extern with the Attorney General's Office, provided invaluable assistance in preparing this report.

Attorney General Ellison urges Minnesotans to use this form to share their stories about the negative effects social media platforms (such as Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, and others) are having on children and teenagers.